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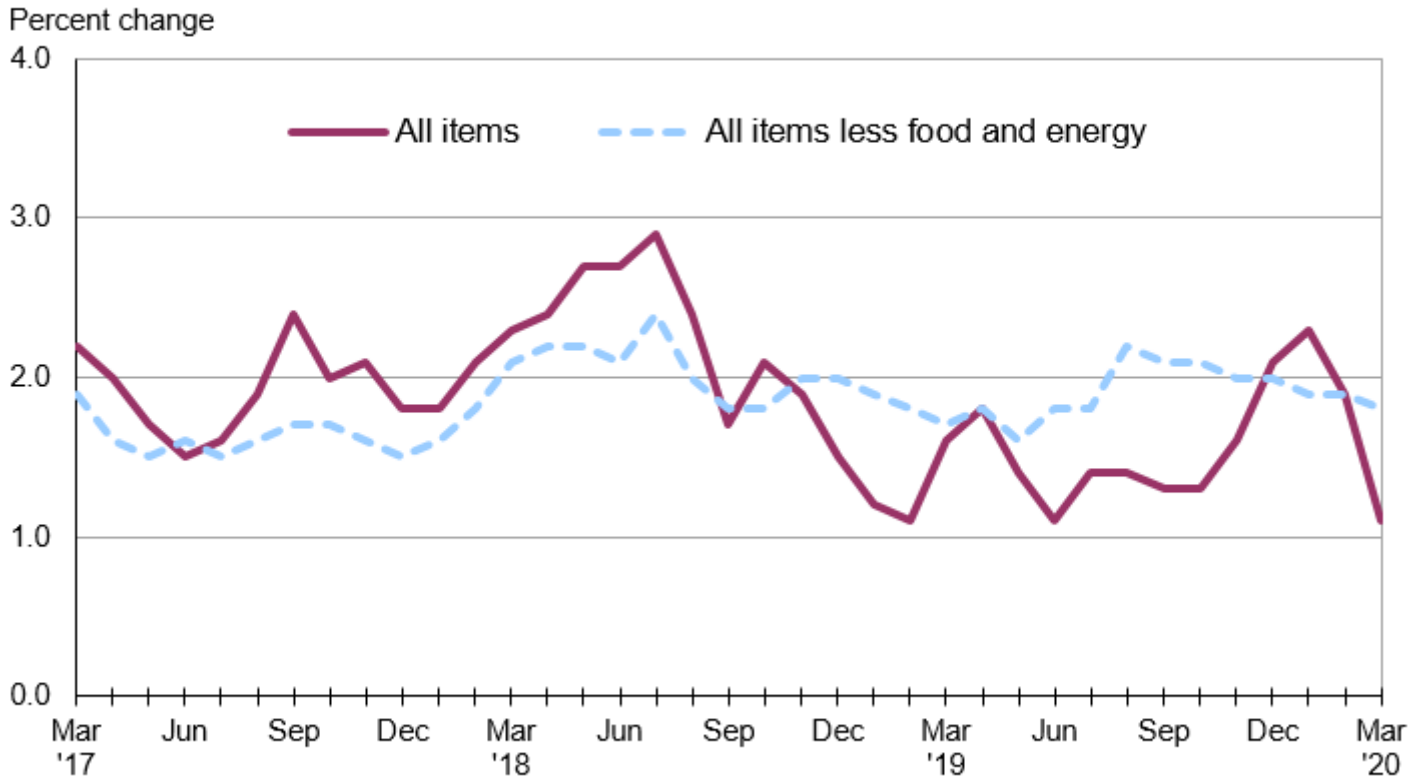
Consumer Price Index, South Region – March 2020

Prices in the South down 0.1 percent over the month; up 1.1 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the South declined 0.1 percent in March, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. The decline in the all items CPI-U was attributed to a 3.9-percent drop in the energy index. From February to March, the index for all items less food and energy inched up 0.1 percent, while the food index rose 0.5 percent. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

The all items CPI-U for the South increased 1.1 percent since March 2019. The index for all items less food and energy rose 1.8 percent over the past year, while the food index increased 1.5 percent. In contrast, the energy index fell 7.7 percent for the 12 months ending March. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, South region, March 2017–March 2020



Food

The food index rose 0.5 percent in March, led by a 0.7-percent increase in the food at home index. The food away from home index also rose in March, up 0.2 percent.

The food index increased 1.5 percent for the 12 months ending March, reflecting increases in the food away from home (2.4 percent) and food at home (0.8 percent) indexes.

Energy

The energy index declined 3.9 percent in March, led by a 7.3-percent drop in the gasoline index. The electricity and the utility (piped) gas service indexes also declined in March, down 0.5 percent and 1.5 percent, respectively.

The energy index fell 7.7 percent from March 2019 to March 2020, reflecting a 13.9-percent drop in the gasoline index. Over the past year, the electricity index declined 0.8 percent and the utility (piped) gas service index declined 3.2 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy rose 0.1 percent in March. Several indexes increased over the month, most notably used cars and trucks (2.4 percent) and shelter (0.2 percent). In contrast, the index for new vehicles declined 0.6 percent in March.

Since March 2019, the index for all items less food and energy advanced 1.8 percent, reflecting increases in the shelter (2.9 percent) and medical care services (4.4 percent) indexes.

Geographic divisions

Additional price indexes are now available for the three divisions of the South. The all items CPI-U for the South Atlantic and West South Central divisions declined in March, down 0.2 percent and 0.1 percent, respectively. The all items index in the East South Central division was unchanged in March.

Over the year, the all items index advanced 1.3 percent in the South Atlantic division. The all items index rose 0.9 percent in the West South Central division and 0.4 percent in the East South Central division.

Table A. South region CPI-U 1-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2017		2018		2019		2020	
	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month
January.....	0.5	2.6	0.5	1.8	0.2	1.2	0.3	2.3
February	0.2	2.8	0.6	2.1	0.5	1.1	0.2	1.9
March	0.0	2.2	0.2	2.3	0.7	1.6	-0.1	1.1
April	0.2	2.0	0.4	2.4	0.5	1.8		
May	0.0	1.7	0.3	2.7	-0.1	1.4		
June.....	0.2	1.5	0.2	2.7	-0.1	1.1		
July	-0.2	1.6	0.0	2.9	0.3	1.4		
August	0.4	1.9	-0.1	2.4	-0.1	1.4		
September.....	0.7	2.4	0.0	1.7	0.0	1.3		
October.....	-0.2	2.0	0.2	2.1	0.2	1.3		
November.....	-0.1	2.1	-0.3	1.9	0.0	1.6		
December.....	-0.1	1.8	-0.5	1.5	0.0	2.1		

The Consumer Price Index for April 2020 is scheduled to be released on Tuesday, May 12, 2020.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Impact on March 2020 Consumer Price Index Data

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) program suspended data collection by personal visit on March 16, 2020. When possible, data normally collected by personal visit were collected either online or by phone. Additionally, data collection in March was affected by the temporary closing or limited operations of certain types of establishments. These factors resulted in an increase in the number of prices being considered temporarily unavailable and imputed. While the CPI program attempted to collect as much data as possible, many indexes are based on smaller amounts of collected prices than usual, and a small number of indexes that are normally published were not published this month. Additional information is available at www.bls.gov/bls/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-bls-price-indexes.htm#CPI. Specific information about the impact of COVID-19 on March 2020 CPI data collection is available at www.bls.gov/cpi/additional-resources/covid19-statement-march-2020.htm.

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 93 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 29 percent of the total population.

The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 5,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 retail establishments—department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The **South region** is comprised of Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods South (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Mar. 2019	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020
Expenditure category						
All Items.....	248.005	248.412	248.136	1.1	0.1	-0.1
All items (December 1977=100).....	402.298	402.958	402.511	-	-	-
Food and beverages	257.296	257.795	258.934	1.5	0.6	0.4
Food	258.570	259.024	260.215	1.5	0.6	0.5
Food at home	240.809	241.229	242.822	0.8	0.8	0.7
Cereal and bakery products	280.071	281.414	281.210	-0.1	0.4	-0.1
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....	247.533	247.291	249.783	2.9	0.9	1.0
Dairy and related products	222.527	223.818	224.933	1.9	1.1	0.5
Fruits and vegetables	286.252	283.229	283.544	-3.5	-0.9	0.1
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials.....	170.384	170.485	172.012	0.1	1.0	0.9
Other food at home	210.989	213.100	215.280	2.2	2.0	1.0
Food away from home.....	287.598	288.107	288.735	2.4	0.4	0.2
Alcoholic beverages	239.176	240.292	240.710	2.0	0.6	0.2
Housing	247.349	247.815	247.958	2.3	0.2	0.1
Shelter	286.674	287.476	287.956	2.9	0.4	0.2
Rent of primary residence	300.887	301.558	302.806	3.7	0.6	0.4
Owners' equiv. rent of residences(1).....	288.886	289.347	289.894	3.1	0.3	0.2
Owners' equiv. rent of primary residence(1)	288.902	289.360	289.908	3.1	0.3	0.2
Fuels and utilities.....	238.495	237.961	236.851	-0.3	-0.7	-0.5
Household energy	190.264	189.566	188.293	-1.2	-1.0	-0.7
Energy services.....	190.381	189.692	188.514	-1.1	-1.0	-0.6
Electricity	188.198	188.118	187.199	-0.8	-0.5	-0.5
Utility (piped) gas service	189.182	184.500	181.705	-3.2	-4.0	-1.5
Household furnishings and operations	125.774	125.751	125.542	1.5	-0.2	-0.2
Apparel	128.299	132.851	132.705	-2.2	3.4	-0.1
Transportation	207.755	206.599	203.615	-2.9	-2.0	-1.4
Private transportation	207.100	205.275	202.913	-2.8	-2.0	-1.2
New and used motor vehicles(2).....	101.036	101.455	101.944	-0.6	0.9	0.5
New vehicles	153.955	154.110	153.177	-0.9	-0.5	-0.6
New cars and trucks(2)(3).....	104.814	104.926	104.288	-0.9	-0.5	-0.6
New cars(3).....	153.055	153.511	152.313	-1.4	-0.5	-0.8
Used cars and trucks.....	137.395	138.769	142.127	0.1	3.4	2.4
Motor fuel	211.955	200.417	185.851	-13.8	-12.3	-7.3
Gasoline (all types).....	210.572	199.037	184.533	-13.9	-12.4	-7.3
Unleaded regular(3)	204.955	193.413	178.781	-14.5	-12.8	-7.6
Unleaded midgrade(3)(4)	236.246	224.535	211.202	-11.2	-10.6	-5.9
Unleaded premium(3).....	235.303	225.289	213.666	-9.3	-9.2	-5.2
Motor vehicle insurance(5).....	962.096	965.423	969.290	1.5	0.7	0.4
Medical care	481.849	482.705	483.983	3.3	0.4	0.3
Medical care commodities.....	353.095	353.282	352.718	-1.1	-0.1	-0.2
Medical care services.....	525.462	526.543	528.441	4.4	0.6	0.4
Professional services	367.264	367.522	367.843	0.3	0.2	0.1
Recreation(2).....	121.506	122.065	122.344	0.4	0.7	0.2
Education and communication(2).....	133.885	133.869	133.811	1.2	-0.1	0.0
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(5) ..	1,358.483	1,358.635	1,360.622	2.3	0.2	0.1
Other goods and services	436.000	437.594	439.029	2.0	0.7	0.3
Commodity and service group						
All Items.....	248.005	248.412	248.136	1.1	0.1	-0.1
Commodities	183.681	183.639	182.934	-1.1	-0.4	-0.4

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods South (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Mar. 2019	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020
Commodities less food and beverages	149.525	149.291	147.956	-2.7	-1.0	-0.9
Nondurables less food and beverages	195.344	194.299	190.260	-4.4	-2.6	-2.1
Nondurables less food, beverages, and apparel	236.495	232.392	226.145	-5.1	-4.4	-2.7
Durables	107.109	107.364	107.723	-0.9	0.6	0.3
Services	312.883	313.766	313.956	2.4	0.3	0.1
Rent of shelter(1)	294.537	295.355	295.918	2.9	0.5	0.2
Transportation services	360.144	364.876	361.956	0.7	0.5	-0.8
Other services	350.520	350.852	351.316	1.5	0.2	0.1
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care	235.275	235.658	235.307	0.8	0.0	-0.1
All items less food	246.123	246.523	246.024	1.0	0.0	-0.2
All items less shelter	233.998	234.255	233.688	0.2	-0.1	-0.2
Commodities less food	152.205	152.003	150.706	-2.5	-1.0	-0.9
Nondurables	224.621	224.314	222.752	-1.2	-0.8	-0.7
Nondurables less food	197.567	196.652	192.887	-4.0	-2.4	-1.9
Nondurables less food and apparel	235.545	231.932	226.317	-4.5	-3.9	-2.4
Services less rent of shelter(1)	345.797	346.791	346.522	1.9	0.2	-0.1
Services less medical care services	293.816	294.677	294.733	2.2	0.3	0.0
Energy	196.064	190.334	182.901	-7.7	-6.7	-3.9
All items less energy	254.643	255.665	256.103	1.8	0.6	0.2
All items less food and energy	254.372	255.494	255.803	1.8	0.6	0.1
Commodities less food and energy commodities	145.218	146.333	146.588	-0.6	0.9	0.2
Energy commodities	215.720	204.179	189.511	-13.7	-12.1	-7.2
Services less energy services	325.851	326.898	327.229	2.7	0.4	0.1

Footnotes

(1) Indexes on a December 1982=100 base.

(2) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

(3) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(4) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

(5) Indexes on a December 1977=100 base.

- Data not available.

Regions defined as the four Census regions. South includes Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.